

WHAT'S *New* in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors, and workers
in the District of Columbia*

Friday, February 17, 2006

MPDC TESTIFIES IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSAL DESIGNED TO RETAIN NEW OFFICERS

Officials of the MPDC testified this past week before a DC Council committee in support of proposal legislation that would require newly hired and trained officers who leave the MPDC to join other law enforcement agencies to repay the city for some of the costs of their training. The "Metropolitan Police Department Applicant Obligated Services Amendment Act of 2006" (Bill 16-586) is under consideration by the Committee on the Judiciary. Eric Coard, the MPDC's Senior Executive Director for Corporate Support, told the Committee that in today's highly competitive law enforcement job market in the DC region, it is common for applicants to "shop around" by applying to multiple law enforcement agencies at the same time. He noted that because the MPDC has cut in half the time it takes to process an application, to about 4-6 months currently, the Department often gains an advantage over other agencies because it is prepared to extend an offer of employment first. "However, this competitive advantage can quickly disappear if the applicant accepts a job offer from the MPDC and then turns around and accepts an offer from another law enforcement agency. This is the practice that the MPDC is hoping an Obligated Services Agreement would discourage," he said. Coard said the MPDC supports the goals of the current legislation, but would like to see some changes. First, the Department recommended that the legislation apply only to officers leaving the MPDC to become a sworn member of another law enforcement agency; it should not apply to officers who may have valid personal reasons for leaving the MPDC, including the realization that they are not suited for police work. Second, the MPDC suggested that the figure for reimbursement be capped at \$5,000. Coard said the cap would reinforce that this legislation is intended, not necessarily to totally recoup training costs, but rather to "discourage applicants who might come to the Department in order to collect a salary and take advantage of excellent training, all the while planning to leave if another law enforcement opportunity is offered."

- ① View a copy of the proposed legislation (in PDF) at:
<http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/imagines/00001/20060106100056.pdf>
- ① For information about sworn career opportunities in the MPDC — including recruit and lateral-hire officers — go to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/cwp/view,a,1230,q,538009.asp>

AGGRESSIVE SPEEDING DROPS BELOW 3 PERCENT IN DC'S PHOTO RADAR ENFORCEMENT ZONES

Aggressive speeding in DC's photo radar enforcement zones reached a near record low rate during January 2006, dropping below 3 percent for only the second time in the program's four-and-a-half year history. Of the more than 3 million vehicles that passed through photo radar enforcement zones during January, just under 79,000 — or about 2.6 percent — were found to be speeding aggressively (that is, traveling above the threshold speed at which citations may be generated). January's low rate is only one-tenth of a percentage point higher than the record low aggressive speeding figure of 2.5 percent, set in October 2005. That compares with aggressive speeding rates of 25-30 percent at the start of the program in the summer of 2001. Two years ago, in January 2004, the aggressive speeding rate in DC was almost 7 percent; in January 2002, the rate was nearly 15 percent. Average speeds on all DC roadways — especially residential streets — continue to be substantially lower today than they were when the program began. On streets with a 25-mph speed limit, for example, the average speed of all vehicles monitored by photo radar was 24.4 mph in January 2006; that is down from 35.5 mph in July 2001. In 30-mph zones, the average motorist was also traveling below the speed limit (27.7 mph) during January 2006; that compares with an average speed of almost 8 mph above the speed limit (37.6 mph) in July 2001. Since August 2001, nearly 1.75 million Notices of Infraction have been mailed and about 1.3 million paid, resulting in fines of just over \$97 million. This level of consistent enforcement has been achieved without taking officers from other community policing assignments or otherwise diminishing public safety services in DC's neighborhoods.

- ① Get the latest photo radar results at:
http://mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/cwp/view,a,1240,q,54810,mpdcNav_GID,1552,mpdcNav,|31886|.asp
- ① For more information about photo radar in DC, including the locations of cameras, go to:
http://mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/cwp/view,a,1240,q,547970,mpdcNav_GID,1552,mpdcNav,|.asp
- ① Red-light running at intersections equipped with safety cameras is down 72 percent in DC. Details at:
http://mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/cwp/view,a,1240,Q,54786,mpdcNav_GID,1552,mpdcNav,|.asp

MPDC REMINDS PUBLIC ABOUT BOOSTER SEAT LAW, AS NEW RESEARCH SHOWS THEIR IMPORTANCE

Parents and caregivers of children are 43 percent more likely to put children in car booster seats once they learn how important booster seats are to child safety and how easy they are to use, according to a new study released this past week by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. The research also found that when booster seats are distributed free of charge, and distribution is combined with information about their use and effectiveness, parents and caregivers are more than twice as likely to use car booster seats than they normally would. Of course, booster seats are not supposed to be an option for children under the age of 8 in DC: city law requires that all children under the age of 8 be properly seated in an infant, toddler or booster seat. The penalty for violating DC's child safety seat law is a fine of at least \$75 and two points on the driver's license, with more severe penalties for repeat offenses. The AAA Foundation says it is crucial to pass booster seat legislation and connect it with educational and outreach components such as car seat clinics, which the MPDC does in concert with other agencies on a regular basis. The DC law applies to any person operating a motor vehicle in the District, and the police can stop a driver solely for not having a child properly restrained. Nationally, more than 400 children aged 4 to 8 are killed in traffic crashes and another 70,000 are injured each year, according to the AAA Foundation. Child booster seats are designed for children approximately four to eight years old, and when properly used with lap and shoulder belts, they can reduce serious injury by 60 percent.

- ① Read the full news release at:
<http://www.aaafoundation.org/multimedia/index.cfm?button=boosterseats>
- ① Learn more about the law in DC at:
http://mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/cwp/view,a,1237,q,547368,mpdcNav_GID,1549,mpdcNav,131835|.asp

SPOTLIGHT ON ... THE EVIDENCE CONTROL BRANCH AND HOW TO RECOVER YOUR PROPERTY

Every year, the MPDC handles more than 100,000 cases in which property is recovered or seized. The Department's Evidence Control Branch approaches this task with two goals in mind: 1) to secure, catalog and store property in a safe manner, and 2) to return all property to its rightful owners, as quickly and efficiently as possible. The MPDC recovers property under many different circumstances, including the recovery of items taken in burglaries. Once officers obtain possession of the property, they are required to classify and record it on a Property Record form and log the item in a property tracking system. Except for impounded vehicles and the property of prisoners, all property is then transferred to Evidence Control, where it is held until final disposition. If you or someone you know has property that has been taken into custody by the MPDC, the Department first of all urges patience. Oftentimes, the decision to release property must be made by the courts, with a signed release from the prosecuting attorney. In some instances, a case must be fully adjudicated before property can be released. While the process can be time-consuming, please be assured that the MPDC will make every effort to return your property as quickly as possible, and to safeguard your valuables while they are in our custody.

- ① Individuals with questions or concerns about the evidence control process can call the Evidence Control Branch at (202) 645-0130 or visit:
http://mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/cwp/view,a,1232,q,540928,mpdcNav_GID,1523,mpdcNav,131417|.asp

NEWS & NOTES

Two New Civilian Job Vacancies. The MPDC is currently accepting applications for two new civilian positions within the agency: a Supervisory Human Resources Specialist in the Labor Relations Division (MS-201-14), and a Supervisory Fingerprint Specialist in the Fingerprint Analysis Branch (MS-072-13). Details are at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/cwp/view,a,1230,q,538142.asp>.

Chatting with the Chief. Chief Ramsey discusses public safety issues and takes phone calls during his monthly "Chatting with the Chief" segment on WHUR-96.3 FM, from 7:15-7:30 pm on Tuesday, February 21.

DATA BOX

Homicides	as of 2/17/06
◆ 2006: 20	
◆ 2005: 17	
◆ % Change: +17.6%	
◆ Closure Rate: 55.0% (11 closures)	
Adult Arrests	week end. 2/11/06
◆ Total: 838	
◆ Weapons: 17	
◆ Robbery: 11	
◆ Auto Theft: 11	
◆ Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 29	
Juvenile Activity	week end. 2/11/06
◆ Arrests: 50	
◆ Curfew Violators: 17	
◆ Truants: 59	
Firearm Recoveries	as of 2/15/06
◆ February: 86	
◆ 2006 Total: 334	
◆ 2005 Total (year-end): 2,344	
Traffic Fatalities	as of 2/17/06
◆ 2006: 7	
◆ 2005: 6	
◆ % Change: +16.7%	

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov. Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with Crimereports.com.

mpdc.dc.gov